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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [UN](#) [BM](#) [UK](#)

SUBJECT: (C)UK ON BURMA: NO THAI REMORSE FOR VISIT; FINNS
NOT BREAKING NEW GROUND

REF: (A) STATE 124139 (B) STATE 127496 (C) STATE 127498

Classified By: Acting Pol Couns Richard Bell for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) We met August 4 with British Foreign Office officials responsible for Burmese affairs. Head of section Nick Alexander had seen our demarche (ref a) over concern that the Finns have invited the Burmese Foreign Minister to ASEM, as it had been shared by a representative of an unspecified EU member state. Alexander said the UK, Dutch, Danes and Australia sought to coordinate their approaches to Burma. He said HMG represented the "harder end" of EU member states' thinking on Burma and that the invitation to the Burmese Foreign Minister was the product of convoluted negotiations within the EU which took place in Rotterdam this past January. These allowed for an invitation to a Burmese Minister with the specific understanding that human rights issues would be put on the agenda of any such meeting. Alexander noted that Burma was represented by a Minister at the 2004 ASEM summit, but the Labor (not Foreign) Minister. Poloff said that an invitation to a Foreign Minister could be viewed as an elevation in participation. Alexander agreed but said HMG's redline was the top echelon of Burmese government, which did not include the Foreign Minister.

¶2. (C) The British Ambassador to Thailand had seen the Prime Minister's deputy coincidentally when news of Thaksin's visit to Burma broke. The Ambassador had asked the purpose of the visit; the reply had been that Thaksin was traveling in his ASEAN capacity and had delivered a message consistent with it. Alexander said he understood that the Thai Ambassador to Burma had not been aware of the visit prior to its occurrence. There had been a meeting of security service officials from across Asia, and it was there that Burmese security service officials had issued the invitation which was quickly accepted. Alexander was of the view that the Thais were "developing lines" (something close to talking points) to explain the visit after the fact. We asked if the British Ambassador had asked whether Thaksin had delivered a stern message about ASSK. Alexander suggested that the Thai lines would make this point; he was less than definitive as to whether the British Ambassador, however, had made a direct inquiry. Alexander surmised that Thaksin would show no remorse for the visit and would build more around it to make it appear as "ASEAN work" to deflect speculation that he went to make or maintain business links.

13. (C) We mentioned reporting from the like-minded meeting (ref b). Alexander clarified that there were no plans for mil-to-mil training emanating from HMG. He and desk officer Penelope Curtis were interested in how many votes the USG thinks are now lined up in support of a Security Council resolution. HMG continues to support a UNSCR on Burma.

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